

NCBD NEWS

NCBD 2002 Update

We are continuing to expand the NCBD project in 2002. As always, participation in NCBD 2002 is open to all sponsors of CAHPS 2.0 and 2.0H surveys, including public and private purchasers and health plans.

An invitation to participate in NCBD 2002 will be sent to all CAHPS sponsors in early February. Sponsors who indicate their intent to participate by returning a Sponsor Project Profile Form will receive an information packet with details on participation.

In response to sponsor requests, we plan to distribute Sponsor Reports earlier this year, provided that sponsors are able to adhere to earlier data submission deadlines. The new data submission and reporting schedule for 2002 is as follows:

Commercial Sponsors:

- Deadline for Submitting Data Files: July 1, 2002
- Target Date for Distribution of Benchmark Reports: September 15, 2002

Medicaid Sponsors:

- Deadline for Submitting Data Files: August 1, 2002
- Target Date for Distribution of Benchmark Reports: October 15, 2002

2002 Data Submission Specifications

NCBD staff is revising the data submission specifications to make the process simpler and more accurate. For 2002, we will minimize the amount of information required and eliminate redundant information from the Sponsor submission forms. Sponsors will be able to access

and download the revised forms directly from the NCBD Web site (<http://ncbd.cahps.org>). In addition, Sponsors will have the option of downloading an Excel file from the web site, completing it and e-mailing it back to NCBD, thereby eliminating hard copies of the data submission documents.

Also in 2002, we will pilot test an electronic data and sponsor information submission process. We will invite four or five sponsors to participate in this pilot program. Invited sponsors will access and enter their information directly through graphical “forms” on the web site in a secure environment. When the required information has been accurately submitted, confirmation will be sent to the sponsor via email. Sponsors participating in this pilot program will also have the option of sending their CAHPS survey data to the NCBD via the web. Please e-mail us at ncbd1@westat.com if you are interested in participating in the pilot program.

2001 Research Data Files Available

Research data files for the 2001 commercial and Medicaid data are now available. The database contains results from 266 commercial and 142 Medicaid sampling units for the adult population. For the child population, the database includes results from 24 commercial and 124 Medicaid sampling units.

Researchers may request access to the data files by following the procedure outlined in the revised NCBD Data Release Policy (http://ncbd.cahps.org/pdf/Data_Release_Policies.pdf). Medicare Managed Care survey data will be added to the database in the near future for use in developing the *NCBD 2001 Annual Report*.

NCBD NEWS

Annual CAHPS® User Meeting

The 8th Annual National CAHPS User Group Meeting will be held **June 6-7th** at the Marriott at Vanderbilt University in **Nashville, Tennessee**. The CAHPS User Meeting is the in-person venue for sharing updates on CAHPS projects, evaluations, other testing, adaptations of CAHPS, as well as updates from AHRQ and the CAHPS Consortium on new CAHPS developments. NCBD will be holding an informational session reviewing our products and services and describing new developments for the database. Details about the meeting, including registration information and the agenda, will be posted on the CAHPS Web site (www.cahps-sun.org) as they become available. We look forward to seeing you there!

NCBD 2001 Sponsor Reports

We are pleased to report that the NCBD 2001 Commercial and Medicaid Sponsor Reports were successfully distributed through our new electronic format to all 19 commercial sponsors in November and to all 19 Medicaid sponsors in December. Based on sponsor feedback last year, the new electronic reports include the following features:

- A streamlined organization that groups all of the results into one section;
- Two methods for summarizing results (one based on statistically significant differences and another based on percentile rank);
- Regional benchmarks ;
- Product-type benchmarks including HMO/POS and PPO benchmarks for commercial sponsors and HMO and PCCM benchmarks for Medicaid sponsors;
- A table highlighting the differences between NCBD data and NCQA Quality Compass® data; and

- Demographic information for the general adult population, for use in comparing to the demographics of the sponsor's respondent sample.

Early feedback on the report changes and electronic format has been very positive. Staff will continue to follow up with individual sponsors to obtain feedback on the new report format.

Commercial and Medicaid Sponsor Reports are no longer available on the Web site. To obtain a copy of your Adult or Child Report, please send your request to ncbd1@westat.com.

CAHPS® Online Workshops: *Using NCBD Reports*

In January, we held two online workshops on Using NCBD Sponsor Reports. One was targeted to Medicaid sponsors and the other to commercial sponsors. The purpose of the interactive sessions was to present and discuss examples of how various types of sponsors use the NCBD Sponsor Reports. For both sessions, the format included presentations by several sponsors followed by general discussion. Highlights of each workshop are presented below.

Using NCBD Sponsor Reports for Medicaid

This workshop included presentations from the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, the Office of Vermont Health Access and the Minnesota Department of Human Services. All three programs implement the CAHPS survey every year or every other year.

Presenters reported using the results for annual reports, presentations, reporting back to plans, reporting to the public, and identifying areas for

NCBD NEWS

performance improvement. Presenters and participants identified the following obstacles to using NCBD data: different reporting requirements from NCQA and NCBD, voluntary submission and small numbers of participants may affect generalizability of data, child and adult results are presented separately, and confidence intervals and P values are not provided.

Looking ahead, all of the presenters expressed an interest in measuring patient experiences at a lower level within the health care system – i.e., at the provider level. Moving to the provider level of measurement raises issues for Medicaid programs including the increased costs of measurement and ensuring that the results can be used to improve care.

Using NCBD Sponsor Reports for the Commercial Population

The commercial workshop included presentations from the HealthCare 21 Business Coalition, the New Mexico Health Policy Commission and HealthPlus of Michigan. HealthCare 21 and New Mexico both reported using CAHPS data along with HEDIS data to create a report for purchasers and consumers to use to select a health plan. HealthPlus reported using CAHPS data to identify and target opportunities for service improvement.

Like the Medicaid sponsors, commercial sponsors identified consistency with NCQA presentation as an obstacle to using the NCBD reports. Commercial sponsors also identified timing of the reports as an obstacle to using the data. They noted that two key questions remain: 1) What is driving member satisfaction? and 2) How do plans use CAHPS data to target improvement?

Next Workshop

The next workshop is on *Developing CAHPS Consumer Reports* and is scheduled for **March**

13th. Registration information for the workshop will be available on www.cahps-sun.org.

Research Highlights: The ECHO Survey

The Experience of Care and Health Outcomes Survey (ECHO™) is designed to collect consumers' ratings of their behavioral health treatment. It is designed to be used by consumers, clinicians, managed behavioral healthcare organizations (MBHO), health care plans, purchasers, States, and Federal agencies.

ECHO™ was developed by a group that included behavioral health consumers, clinicians and behavioral health policy experts, including representatives from CAHPS®, NCQA, NCQA's Behavioral Health Measurement Advisory Panel, the Mental Health Statistics Improvement Program, the Human Services Research Institute, the Center for Mental Health Services, the Washington Circle Group, the American Managed Behavioral Health Care Association, and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

The instrument was intended for potential inclusion in HEDIS®. Currently, NCQA encourages MBHOs to use the ECHO™ to meet some of the MBHO accreditation requirements. The development group is also applying to have the ECHO™ survey adopted as a CAHPS® instrument.

MBHO and health plan versions of the ECHO™ survey are currently available. Both surveys ask exactly the same questions about treatment and counseling services, however, the plan survey includes a few more items about administrative services, such as filling out paperwork and finding information in written materials. The MBHO version consists of 50 questions and the health plan version consists of 63 questions.

NCBD NEWS

A child questionnaire is also currently being developed.

The ECHO™ contains items assessing consumer experience with specialty behavioral health care, including mental health, alcohol and drug, and other substance abuse services. ECHO™ is intended to assess a number of aspects of care, including:

- Getting care quickly.
- Communication with clinicians.
- Information provided by clinicians on medication side effects.
- Family involvement in care.
- Information about self-help groups and treatment.
- Cultural competency.
- Perceived improvement in functioning.
- Patient rights.
- Health plan or MBHO administrative services.

The surveys are available for download from <http://www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/echo/home.html>.

Detailed specifications and other user support materials to guide survey administration and interpretation of the results are being developed.

ECHO data will be included in the NCBD database beginning in 2002. Like the other CAHPS surveys, each participating site will be provided a report that compares the site's results with those from other sponsors.

NCBD Web Site

We will be revising the NCBD Web site with a new look and organization. Remember to visit the site at <http://ncbd.cahps.org> for general information and updates.